

Thoughts

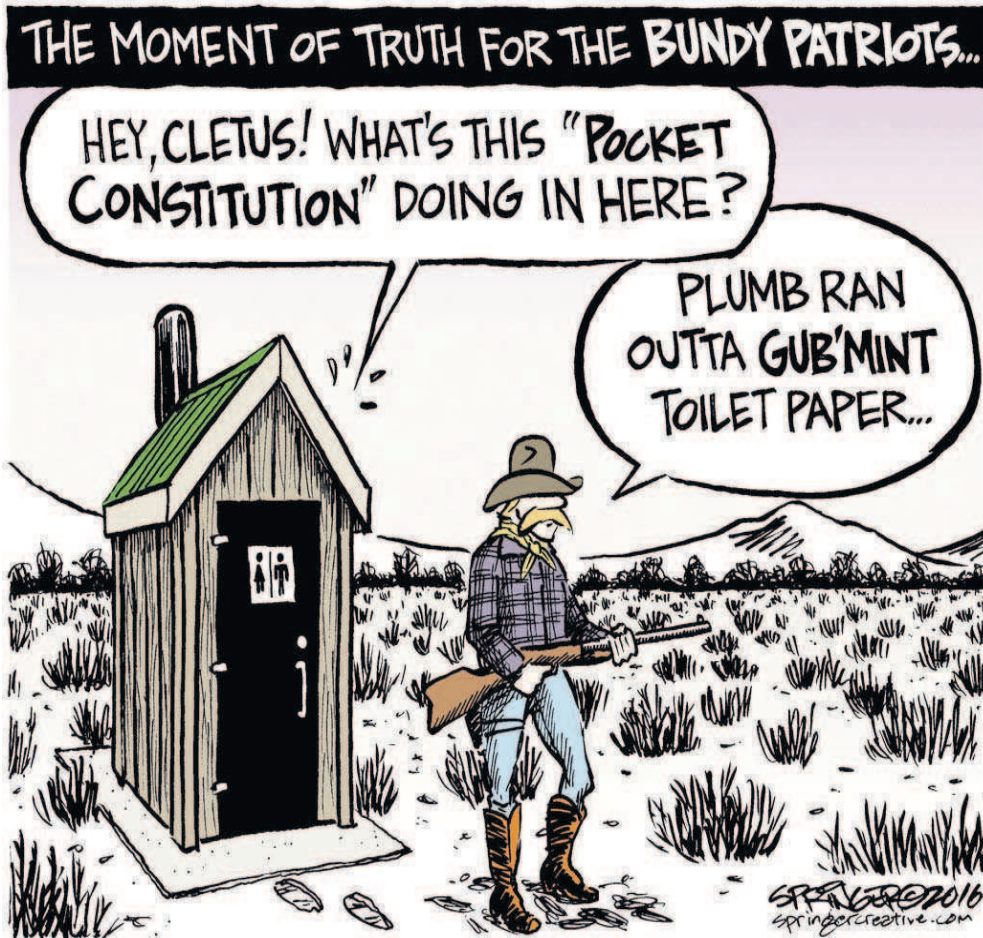
Just a few questions about the passing scene: Congressman Greg Walden and Mr. Barry Bushue, president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, think new laws need to be passed that will “prohibit prosecution of farmers and ranchers...” for breaking existing federal laws, because it’s having “... a ‘chilling effect’ on farm practices” (“As US focuses on rural West, what’s next?” *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 19).

Is not punishment for breaking laws specifically intended to have a chilling effect? How about the farmers and ranchers stop breaking them?

Secondly, why is the Astoria City Council entertaining a proposal of \$29 million for this new library? How about entertaining taking about one tenth of that amount, spending say \$900,000 to fix up the existing building, and putting \$2 million into ... oh ... maybe books? That’s what the library sorely lacks (“City Council might downsize library project,” *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 13).

And lastly, why do your editors think that years of “no economic growth” in a logging-dominated area where all the marketable timber has already been cut and milled should be “an alarm” (“40 years of no growth should be an alarm bell,” *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 19)? Endless growth is cancer, not a viable economic plan or principle.

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria



Thank you

The Warrenton Community Center Advisory Board held a breakfast with Santa at the Warrenton Community Center on Saturday, Dec. 19. The breakfast was a great success, and we want to thank the community for their awesome support.

We served 200 individuals. A special thanks to all our great volunteers; to the Starbucks Coffee shop in Warrenton for their great coffee; the Pig 'N Pancake for their pancake batter;

Warrenton Mini Mart and Warrenton Deep Sea for purchasing supplies and food; Mel and Betsy Jasmin for the raffle items, and for their monetary contributions; Veterans of Foreign Wars No. 1228 and the VFW Auxiliary; Warrenton Fiber; Ocean Beauty; Lektro; Main Street Market; Costco; Marcia Harper Insurance; McCall Tire Center; Wauna Federal Credit Union; and the Columbia River Bar Pilots.

A special thanks goes to the Pig 'N Pancake staff who made sure our pancakes were

up to standards set by the restaurant, to Santa for dropping in, and to the volunteers from the senior citizens group who served our breakfast and washed our dishes.

FRANK BECKER
Chairman, Warrenton Community Center Advisory Board

Face reality

The only word missing was “pristine” (“Oyster growers need shrimp fix,” *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 14). Despite the routine spraying of oyster

beds with pesticides and nearby clear-cut forests with herbicides, Willapa Bay is often touted for its “pristine” waters. While it is true that oysters thrive in clean water, the definition of “clean” is open to interpretation.

The oyster industry, like all other industries, has to face up to the realities of the marketplace. That marketplace is increasingly demanding chemical-free food, produced in an environmentally responsible manner. Even large retailers, including Costco and Walmart, are responding to the food demands of their customer base.

To assert that the oyster industry’s dilemma with burrowing shrimp is the fault of those who “don’t live here”—city dwellers, in other words—is ignoring reality. You don’t have to go far in our rural area to find the terms “organic,” “chemical free,” “GMO free,” and “rBST free” on products available at any food retailer, and on the menus of many restaurants. This marketplace phenomenon is happening despite the millions spent, and columns printed, to defeat food labeling legislation favored by many consumers.

Like any other industry faced with a legacy of pollution, the oyster industry (yes, it’s an industry) will have to adapt and find ways to coexist with native burrowing shrimp. This has already been done by a small grower in Willapa Bay, and it can be done again on a larger scale.

FRED WHITE
Astoria

Grateful

I am so grateful to the young lady who found my purse at Fred Meyer on Wednesday, Jan. 13. It was returned to the Information Desk intact. I extend a huge ‘thank you’ and ‘God bless you for your honesty.’

It is so good to know that there are good people in our community. Again, I say thank you.

EILEEN STRAIN
Warrenton

Helping Linda

Linda Geisler is a cashier at Astoria’s Safeway store. She always remembers people’s names and greets each person in a way that honors their presence. She is sweet rain in a parched desert. More times than not I have left the store feeling better than when I entered, after being served by her.

So, I was sad to read in the obituaries section that her young 25-year-old daughter, Whitney Ferguson, had lost her life to addiction. Such a loss is unbearable and unjust. I did not know Whitney, but if she was like her mother, she was special.

The obituary for Whitney asked for donations to the Northwest Chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency in her name. I will send a donation to them, but I also wish to send a donation to Linda, in memory of Whitney, for care of their horses. It would be kind if all those who have been touched by Linda’s grace do the same.

POLLYANNA MINER
Warrenton

Ten values, beliefs that will shape Oregon’s 2016 political landscape

By ADAM DAVIS
For *The Daily Astorian*

On your mark, get set ... go! Here comes election year 2016.

Oregonians will be facing a number of potentially divisive issues including raising the corporate minimum tax, raising the minimum wage, and rolling back climate change legislation. We are entering a year that state Sen. Peter Courtney describes as possibly being our Armageddon. It is also the time of year for reflection and list-making, so here’s another one for the record book, based on DHM Research surveys and focus groups: Oregonians’ values and beliefs that will inform the state’s political landscape in 2016.

First at the 50,000 foot level.

1. Oregonians remain woefully ignorant about how government, politics, and public finance work. Many do not know how many branches of government we have in Oregon and cannot name a tax that helps pay for state government service.

Sadly, they also have little knowledge about the state’s geography and history. How much of the state is outside the Willamette Valley? Which way does the water flow in the Willamette River? What can you tell me about the beach bill, the bottle bill, SB 100, Tom McCall?

“Who?” “What?” ... Oh well, you get the idea.

2. Oregonians are split in assessing the state’s current direction. About the same number believe the state is headed in the right direction as believe we’re off on the wrong track.

Scary, however, is how soft the right direction people are in their feelings. Bring up such issues as the state’s high school graduation rate, rural poverty statistics, PERS, or even national and international issues like terrorism, immigration, and climate change and they are quick to get squeamish.

3. The economy and education are important to Oregonians, and they want their state government officials to do something about these issues. Underneath this sentiment, however, the negativity and skepticism on both issues runs high.

For example, with the economy, government officials’ self-congratulatory breast-pounding over the

falling unemployment rate does not impress voters; they are looking for family-wage jobs with benefits in eco-friendly businesses. For education, voters want better use of the money the schools already have as much as they want more money for them. It is also more specifically about K-12 education and less about colleges and universities.

And while the economy and education are important, just as important is government spending and taxation. Related to this is also a growing sentiment that our system of government is broken.

4. Despite strong differences between political parties about how much government should be involved in addressing the challenges facing the state, we Oregonians continue to value the same things about living here: the clean air and water, natural beauty, outdoor recreation opportunities, sense of community, and climate (snow, baby, snow!).

We also are concerned about the future of small businesses in Oregon and our low-income children and seniors.

5. Perhaps as validation of what they value about living in Oregon, residents consider the most important “public services” still to be police, fire and emergency services, all basic to feeling secure and having a sense of community. But, just as important to Oregonians is protection of productive forest and farm land and air and water quality, along with K-12 education and services for low-income children and seniors.

Economic development subsidies and tax breaks for attracting or developing businesses remain at the bottom of the list.

These preferences cut across political and demographic subgroups, but — because they’re public services — they are also susceptible to concerns about government spending and taxation, which can quickly put people in opposing camps. Talking about core values and public, private, and nonprofit partnerships helps unify feeling, especially with more involvement and leadership from the



Adam Davis

Gird your loins!

private and nonprofit sectors.

Now at the ground level.

6. Proponents of increasing the corporate minimum tax are currently sitting pretty. They have going for them a good ballot measure title, voter antipathy toward big business, and concern about K-12 funding, fueled by headlines about low graduation rates.

On the other hand, the measure would be in trouble if there was another measure on the ballot directing any increase in taxes to property tax relief or a companion measure with a reduced tax rate.

7. A graduated increase in the minimum wage to \$15 in 2019 is a toss-up at this point, but \$13.50 by 2019 does better.

But a strong 40 percent or so appear to oppose the measure either way. Many of these are older residents, Republicans, or voters who live outside the Willamette Valley.

8. If the unions go for increased corporate taxes, will business go after the unions? Well, we’re not sure where that would get them.

Currently voters appear split on a Right-to-Work measure similar to Wisconsin’s.

About 40 percent support Oregon’s current law, which allows collective bargaining agreements that require non-member, union-represented employees to share in the costs of union representation. A similar number support allowing non-union public employees to refuse to share costs. A good chunk of voters are undecided.

9. And what about repealing current law requiring the Environmental Quality Commission to adopt rules for low carbon fuel standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

“No” is up by 17 points. This is not surprising in light of a strong majority of Oregonians who tell us that climate change requires us to change our way of life, such as driving less or living more simply.

10. And number 10 for our list is . . . the ground game. It is all going to be about voter turnout. The higher the turnout of younger and minority voters, the better the results will be for Democrats. It is that simple.

A competitive presidential

election will help, but here in Oregon will less frequent voters take time to wade through a long list of ballot measure descriptions and local candidate choices? Hard to say, but that is where the action will be this coming year: Get out the vote!

Is 2016 the year of Armageddon for Oregon? Considering what Oregonians don’t know about government and politics, one wonders whether

they know what Senate President Peter Courtney means.

The Webster Dictionary’s definition for Armageddon is “the site or time of a final and conclusive battle between the forces of good and evil.”

The site is Oregon, the time is now, and good and evil are in the eye of the beholder. As battle lines are being drawn, we may want to keep in mind what voters know, care about,

and how they’re feeling about some key issues. It may serve us well as we start the battle that is election year 2016. Gird your loins (know what that means?!)

Adam Davis, who has been conducting opinion research in Oregon for more than 35 years, is a founding principal in DHM Research, an independent, nonpartisan firm. Visit www.dhmresearch.com.

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- A Matter of Balance class **503-338-7564**
- Strong Women, Strong Bones class **503-338-7564**
- Tai Chi **503-338-7564**

Manage Pain

- Physical Therapy Services **503-338-7555**
- Chronic Pain Management class **503-338-7564**

Eat Healthier

- Diabetes Education **503-338-4012**
- Living Well with Diabetes class **503-338-7564**
- Healthy Eating for Successful Living class **503-338-7564**

Quit Tobacco

- Tobacco Cessation **503-338-7564**

Help Others

- Volunteer **503-325-4321**
- Donate **503-325-3208**

Tai Chi is back!

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